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Prime Minister's schedule, July 16

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)

July 18, 2006

Evening

Working dinner with Summit participants at the Constantine Palace in a suburb of St. Petersburg.

Prime Minister's schedule, July 17

Morning

Meetings with leaders of guest countries and delegates from international organizations at the palace.

Noon

Working lunch, followed by a photo session.

Afternoon

Met with Indian Prime Minister Singh at the cottage allocated to Japan. Gave a press conference for domestic and foreign reporters at the International Media Center.

4) Poll: Cabinet support rate inches up to 41%

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TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)
July 15, 2006

The approval rating for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet was 41.6%, according to findings from a Jiji Press poll released yesterday for July. The figure was up 1.0 percentage points from the preceding month. The disapproval rating was 38.4%, down 0.2 points. The government was questioned about its action in the wake of North Korea's recent firing of missiles, but there was no big change in the approval and disapproval ratings for the Koizumi cabinet. In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) was at 11.0%, down 1.1 points. The DPJ sustained a drop in its popularity rating for the first time since DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa took the party helm in April.

The survey was conducted July 7-10 across the nation on a fact-to-face basis, with a total of 2,000 persons chosen from among males and females aged 20 and over. The retrieval rate was 69.0%.

In the breakdown of public support for other political parties, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stood at 23.9%, down 0.5 points from last month. The DPJ dropped for the first time in three months. The New Komeito party, an LDP-allied coalition partner, was at 3.4%, up 0.1 points. The Japanese Communist Party was at 1.7%, up 0.4 points. The Social Democratic Party (Shaminto) was at 1.2% and the People's New Party (Kokumin Shinto) at 0.1%, respectively leveling off from last month. No respondents picked the New Party Nippon (Shinto Nippon). Those who have no party to support accounted for 57.1%.

5) Poll: Abe leads Fukuda in post-Koizumi race

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)
July 16, 2006

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe ranked top at 47.1% as a politician appropriate to be the next prime minister, according to findings from a Jiji Press poll released yesterday. His popularity in July was down 1.4 percentage points from the preceding month. Yasuo Fukuda, one of Abe's predecessors in the CCS post, ranked second at 17.0%, down 4.1 points. Their margin has increased from 27.4 points in the last poll to 30.1 points in the latest poll.

The survey was conducted July 7-10 across the nation on a fact-to-face basis, with a total of 2,000 persons chosen from among men and women aged 20 and over. The retrieval rate was 69.0%.

Among other politicians, Foreign Minister Taro Aso ranked third at 3.8%, followed by Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki at 1.6% and Senior Vice Justice Minister Taro Kono at 0.8%. Abe gained an advantage among all political party supporters. Among those supporting the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Abe stood at 65.7%, with Fukuda at 15.2. Among those supporting New Komeito, the

coalition partner of the LDP, Abe was at 51.1% and Fukuda at 21.3%. Among those supporting the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), Abe was at 36.8% and Fukuda at 29.6.

6) Prime Minister Koizumi calls on North Korea to return to 6-party talks

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpt)
July 18, 2006

TOKYO 00003967 004 OF 011

By Nobusuke Tanaka in St. Petersburg, Russia

Prime Minister Koizumi, speaking to the domestic and foreign press corps following the end of the G8 Summit on the evening of July 17 (Same evening in Japan), stressed the following in referring to the recently passed resolution against North Korea by the United Nations Security Council: "I think that North Korea did not imagine that it would be passed by unanimous agreement, including China and Russia. North Korea should take this message seriously." He also pointed out: "The North should consider its own security and economic development in that context by returning as soon as possible to the six-party talks." He urged that country to quickly rejoin six-party talks.

7) Prime Minister Koizumi displays leadership on North Korea issue in avoiding discussions from becoming concentrated only on Middle East; Ways for settlement remain unclear

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
July 18, 2006

St. Petersburg, Masanori Yamaguchi

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on July 17 completed his 6th and last G-8 Summit (St. Petersburg Summit) schedule. Amid the ongoing military action by Israel against Lebanon, European leaders were keen to discuss the Middle East issue. However, the prime minister displayed his presence as a regular participant, conducting discussions on the North Korea issue and secured the solidarity of the Summit members on Pyongyang's missile, abduction and nuclear issues.

Discussions on the afternoon of the 16th and during the luncheon on the 17th were centered on the regional situations. According to a participant, members pursued heated discussions on Israel's strikes on Lebanon and how to reconstruct the Middle East peace process. The Middle East issue took up about three quarters of the session on the afternoon of the 16th. Some delegates who were not at the conference took a sober view of the development of the discussions, noting, "The North Korea issue has ended with the adoption of a resolution at the UNSC."

Under such circumstances, the prime minister resorted to a strategy of attracting the interest of leaders of participating countries by introducing messages from leaders of concerned Middle East countries, which he visited right before the Summit, instead of forcibly guiding the topic of discussions to the North Korea issue. Once he attracted the attention of participants to his statement, he called for solidarity over the North Korea issue.

8) North Korea, Middle East come into in spotlight: Prime Minister Koizumi bows out at his sixth G-8 Summit in triumph

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Almost Full)
July 18, 2006

The St. Petersburg Summit is the last summit for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who is to step down in September. He appears to have made his presence felt by reporting to the other leaders on the situation in the Middle East, which he visited right before the summit, or leading discussions on North Korea's missile launches.

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Though his Asia diplomacy lacks luster, he appears to have managed discussions with other summit participants well, marking a brilliant close to his final summit.

President Putin on July 15 started off the Japan-Russia talks with the remark, "We are looking forward to hearing a report on your visit to the Middle East." The prime minister responded: "This is my last summit. I will cooperate so that this summit, which Russia chairs for the first time, will be a meaningful one."

He reported on his visit to the Middle East during a session on the international situation on the 16th. He revealed that his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was held in a tense atmosphere on the day when the abduction of Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah took place. He then introduced his own plan for a corridor of peace and prosperity, which advocates the realization of peace in the Middle East.

Regarding North Korea's missile launches, the prime minister expressed concern and called for international solidarity for a comprehensive settlement of issues related to that nation, including nuclear development, missiles, and the abduction issue. Other leaders supported Koizumi's call, noting, "We are all in unity over the North Korea issue," or "We totally agree with you. In particular, we support Japan on the abduction issue."

Winding up the day's long session, the prime minister took a walk on the beach near his room to view the sunset over the Baltic Sea. He then bumped into Canadian Prime Minister Harper and his wife. He told them, "I am also a setting sun." Mrs. Harper then showed consideration to him, responding, "No, you a rising sun."

Koizumi has participated in six G-8 summits, the largest number of any Japanese prime minister, topping the five marked by Yasuhiro Nakasone. It is certain that he made his presence felt in the international community.

9) Ozawa denies Japan took initiative in UNSC resolution on North Korea

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
July 18, 2006

Ichiro Ozawa, president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), delivered a speech in Tokyo yesterday. In it, he denied that Japan played a leading role in the United Nations Security Council's adoption of a resolution denouncing North Korea in which there was no mention of the UN Charter's Chapter 7. "Japan was made to play the role of a hardliner, and behind the scenes, backroom wheeling and dealing between the United States and China and also between the United States and Russia was carried on," Ozawa said. "Japan is unwilling to admit its own defeat (while saying the resolution is binding) in interpretation, but in point of fact, Japan only played a role," he added.

"In the end, they had no choice but to cross out Chapter 7 (as an endorsement of sanctions against North Korea)," Ozawa noted.

10) GSDF completes pullout of troops from Iraq; Japan dispatched 55,000 troops to Iraq in two and a half years

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpt)

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July 18, 2006

Koichiro Takano, Kuwait

The last 220 Ground Self-Defense Force troops of a 600-member contingent dispatched to the southern Iraq city of Samawah arrived at 1:35 p.m. on July 17 at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait after leaving Taril Airport in Samawah on an Air Self-Defense Force C-130 transport plane. All the 600 GSDF members have pulled out of Iraq safely and they will return to Japan by the end of this month.

11) Moves for establishing a permanent SDF dispatch law likely to gain momentum; GSDF completes troop pullout from Iraq; ASDF troops to continue activities for a while, engage in broader range of activities

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
July 18, 2006

Yoso Furumoto

Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) troops deployed to Iraq were all withdrawn yesterday from Iraq after finishing two and a half years of reconstruction assistance to that country. The dispatch of GSDF troops was a symbol of Koizumi diplomacy that has focused on the strengthening of the alliance with the United States. Without having suffered a single casualty, GSDF ended its tour with a successfully completed withdrawal. This success is likely to serve as a foothold for Japan to move on to the next stage of SDF cooperation with the US. On the other hand, Japan intends to continue the deployment of Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF) troops to Kuwait for a while and widen their activity of transporting goods and personnel for the multinational forces and the United Nations (UN). Moves to establish a permanent law that will enable the SDF to dispatch its troops abroad on such missions as peacekeeping operations are likely to gain momentum in the next administration after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi steps down.

"Those who are unwilling to be dispatched must not be dispatched," Koizumi reiterated. Lying behind this phrase was his concern that the loss of lives could happen.

Japan therefore gave the top priority to safety in considering SDF activities. Iraq's southern city of Samawah is said to be relatively stable, but Japan judged that overland transportation of goods would be dangerous, so SDF activities in that city were centered on water supply, medical guidance, and the supervision of repair works. These activities were carried out without pointing a gun at residents; as a result, SDF troops were able to build friendly ties with the local community. They have also received a good evaluation from other countries as a model for reconstruction assistance carried out by troops.

Japan dispatched GSDF troops in response to the US request. In order to pull out the troops, it was necessary for Japan to obtain America's understanding and in return for the pullout to expand ASDF troops' activities to cover Baghdad and the northern province, Arbil. Japan's basic plan for reconstruction assistance under the special measures law on Iraq reconstruction assistance will expire in December. The government then will be forced to make a decision whether to continue the ASDF troop deployment.

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When the plans for the realignment of US forces in Japan are implemented, the SDF and US forces will be even more unified in their activities. The New National Defense Program Guideline also has worked out the policy of expanding activities for international peace and cooperation. When the US deploys their troops abroad next time, the US will likely expect Japan to do more than it did in the dispatch of its troops to Iraq.

In anticipation of such a possible request, the Liberal Democratic Party has already begun discussing the question of establishing a permanent law relating to the overseas SDF dispatch.

12) JDA chief Nukaga emphasizes need to establish a permanent law on overseas SDF dispatch

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
July 18, 2006

Kyodo News Service, Kuwait

At a press conference yesterday afternoon (late at night on the same day, Japan time), Defense Agency (JDA) Director-General Fukushima Nukaga spoke of the question of whether to establish a permanent law

that will enable the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to dispatch its troops abroad as needed and emphasized the need to establish such a law, saying: "I think it is desirable that a general law will be established so that the SDF will take action swiftly and expand their activities."

In addition, Nukaga said, "This matter should be discussed in the ruling parties," indicating he welcomed the start of a full-fledged discussion on the matter in the ruling camp.

13) Nukaga: GSDF's original objectives accomplished

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)

July 18, 2006

Takashi Imai, Kuwait

Defense Agency Director-General Fukushima Nukaga held a press conference at a hotel in Kuwait City on the evening of July 17 (night of July 17, Japan time). Referring to the fact that all Ground Self-Defense Force troops withdrew from Iraq, the defense chief said: "The GSDF has assisted the reconstruction of Iraq by the Iraqi people. The GSDF has completed its original objectives." Nukaga also noted regarding conditions for a withdrawal of Kuwait-based Air Self-Defense Force troops, who have been engaged in an airlift mission: "We will consider it by taking into account a broad range of factors, such as Iraq's security situation and management by the Iraqi government."

Nukaga also met with Kuwaiti Defense Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak al-Hamad as-Sebah in Kuwait City on the night of July 16 (early July 17, Japan time) and asked for support for the ASDF. In response, Jaber said: "We greatly appreciate Japan's assistance to Iraq. Japan is an important country for Kuwait, and we plan to extend any assistance possible."

14) Unstable security situation In Iraq forces government to review its private-sector strategy

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YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)

July 18, 2006

Takashi Imai, Kuwait

The Ground Self-Defense Force's reconstruction assistance in Iraq that has lasted two years and a half has finally come to an end. The Iraq mission provided Japan with an opportunity for further international contributions and challenges.

On July 13, a ceremony was held at the Olympic stadium in the southern Iraqi city of Samawah to transfer security duties from the multinational force to the Iraqi government.

The stadium's grounds, devastated by war, have been improved by GSDF troops, and its plumbing and spectators' seats have been repaired with funds from Japan's official development assistance (ODA). The ceremony was an embodiment of Japan's successful combination of the SDF and the ODA.

Unlike peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations, Japan independently arranged the Iraq mission, including its destination, its duration, and its specific activities. Japan's comprehensive assistance in Iraq, including ODA, has won high marks internationally.

In some areas, Japan's assistance has not preceded as planned

The government has hoped that private firms would continue with the GSDF's reconstruction assistance in Iraq in order to turn interests linked to energy in Japan's favor by establishing communication channels with them. But the unstable security situation in Iraq due to intensifying terrorism and sectarian conflicts is forcing Japan to review its strategy of sending private firms to Iraq.

Private corporations remain unable to conduct advance surveys for ODA projects. In October 2003, the government announced ODA totaling 5 billion dollars (about 550 billion yen) to Iraq. Of its yen loans worth 3.5 billion dollars, the use of 2.8 billion dollars has not been determined.

15) Japan will not carry out preemptive attack: Koizumi

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
July 18, 2006

St. Petersburg-Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, meeting the press at the International Media Center in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia, yesterday evening (yesterday night Japan time), referred to the United Nations Security Council's adoption of a resolution denouncing North Korea, and he urged North Korea to return to the six-party talks at an early date. "It's extremely important that the Security Council unanimously adopted the resolution," Koizumi said. "North Korea should take this message seriously and should return to the six-party talks as soon as possible," he added. At the same time, Koizumi also said, "If they come back to the six-party talks, they can hold bilateral talks, as well as behind-the-scenes talks." With this, Koizumi indicated that it would be possible for North Korea to hold talks with the United States as desired by North Korea if North Korea returns to the six-party talks.

In addition, Koizumi ruled out the idea of carrying out a preemptive

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attack against North Korea in connection with the rise of arguments over the advisability of striking enemy bases in the wake of North Korea's recent firing of missiles. "We're exclusively defense-oriented, and we have no intention at all to carry out a preemptive attack against any country," Koizumi remarked.

However, Koizumi indicated that Japan would improve the Self-Defense Forces' equipment, saying, "We should maintain our own deterrent capabilities so that they will not misunderstand and think that Japan would not resist even if it is attacked."

16) JDA chief Nukaga to visit Okinawa in late August, eager to advance plans for the realignment of US forces in Japan

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
July 18, 2006

Takashi Imai, Kuwait

Defense Agency Director-General Nukaga late at night on July 16 (early July 17, Japan time) told reporters traveling with him at a Kuwait hotel that he would visit Okinawa in late August. He is scheduled to meet with Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro of Nago City, a planned relocation site for the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station currently in Ginowan City, and other officials. Nukaga highlighted his eagerness to advance plans for the US force realignment, including the relocation of MCAS Futenma, which has made little progress.

On the relocation of Futenma, the central government and the Okinawa prefectural government agreed on May 11 that they would basically follow the government plan to relocate the base to a coastal area of Camp Schwab.

On May 20, the cabinet approved a basic policy concerning the US force realignment in Japan that includes the establishment of a consultative organ among the central and prefectural governments, and relevant municipalities. But the prefectural government has been opposed to the central government's attitude of going ahead with the government plan as a prearranged course. No prospects are in sight for such a consultative organ, let alone when its first meeting will take place.

The central government intends to map out a construction plan for an alternative facility by October. By making a tour of Okinawa, Nukaga apparently intends to pave the way for the relocation, with an eye on Prime Minister Koizumi's stepping down in September.

According to a senior JDA official, the following view is emerging in the government: "A preparatory organization for a consultative organ should be first established, and discussions with Nago City and other municipalities willing to talk with the central government should be held first, bypassing the Okinawa prefectural government."

17) Three Minshuto executives tour US bases in Okinawa to pave way for combining efforts of anti-LDP forces

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
July 16, 2006

Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) President Ichiro Ozawa, acting

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president Naoto Kan, and Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama separately toured US bases in Okinawa on July 15. The purpose was to play up the party's stance of placing high priority on Okinawa and its strong rivalry toward the ruling coalition with an eye on the Okinawa gubernatorial election this fall and the Upper House election next summer. But the party's stance remains elusive regarding the highly controversial plan to relocate Futenma Air Station.

Ozawa visited Futenma Air Station in Ginowan and Kan and Hatoyama toured Camp Schwab in Nago, the relocation site for Futenma Air Station.

After the tour, Ozawa harshly criticized the government and the ruling coalition before reporters in Naha, saying: "If Japan is America's true ally, the two countries must talk things over. Japan is at America's beck and call, and that is embodied in the base issue."

Ozawa is digging in his heels against the ruling coalition over the US force realignment issue apparently with the Okinawa gubernatorial election this fall and the Upper House election next summer in mind.

Five opposition parties in Okinawa, including Minshuto, have decided to field a single candidate for the gubernatorial race under the slogan of opposing US force realignment.

To Ozawa, eager to bring about regime change, Okinawa is a symbol of Japan-US relations and a vital constituency for joining forces opposed to the LDP-New Komeito coalition. A victory by the opposition camp's candidate in the Okinawa gubernatorial election could pave the way for rallying anti-LDP forces together for next year's Upper House election.

But Minshuto's stance remains unclear regarding the planned relocation of Futenma Air Station to Camp Schwab, a major campaign issue.

Last August, the party released its Okinawa vision urging the government to look for ways to relocate Futenma Air Station out of Okinawa first and then to aim for relocation abroad based on changes to the environment surrounding its strategy. The party also backed a candidate advocating a site outside Okinawa in the Nago mayoral race in January this year.

The circumstances have changed tremendously since last August, as evidenced by an agreement between Tokyo and Washington to relocate Futenma functions to the coastal area of Camp Schwab and the Nago mayor's approval of the plan.

A senior Minshuto member said, "At present, we cannot say 'yes' or 'no' to the relocation plan."

On July 15, Ozawa only said, "It's best to reflect the wishes of local residents," without referring to the government's Futenma relocation plan.

18) Abe to publish book containing his political vision

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
July 18, 2006

TOKYO 00003967 011 OF 011

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, considered to be the most likely candidate to succeed Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, will publish a book on July 20 titled "Toward a Beautiful Country." It will contain a draft of the political vision he will use in the September Liberal Democratic Party presidential election. Some LDP lawmakers assume that Abe may aim to use this book to further boost popular support even though he already has the edge over other possible candidates.

Abe writes in the book his basic thinking about Asia diplomacy, the Constitution, education and social security.

On Asia policy, Abe criticizes Chinese and South Korean leaders for refusing to hold meetings at the summit level due to Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine. The expectation is that he seek to improve Japan's relations with other Asian countries, including India and Australia. The book also likely contains measures to create a society in which those who once failed once can have another chance to try again, giving consideration to criticism of the Koizumi reform drive for widening the income gap.

Abe has put off the announcement of his candidacy for the LDP presidential race planned until sometime after the G-8 summit, probably to late August. There was a view that the publication of his book might be delayed like his planned announcement of candidacy. But a person close to Abe said, "The book will go on sale on July 20."

SCHIEFFER